

Bromsgrove District Council

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Worcestershire Regulatory Services

Aligned to Help me to Keep my Place Safe and Looking Good

I am pleased to present my report to councillors for the areas covered by my portfolio. In so doing I would like to look back over recent events and forward to emerging issues affecting our council and our residents.

BEREAVEMENT SERVICES

BROMSGROVE CEMETERY, CHURCH LANE

Badger issue:

The badgers occupying the main sett in a private garden adjacent to the cemetery have excavated two additional entrance holes in the grass verge near to their sett. They have also excavated three holes between the graves, which are separated from their sett by a path. Previous works carried out have been to install a badger fence between the path and the main sett which may mean that the three holes in question are small outlying setts, rather than entrance holes leading to the main sett.

Following a period of monitoring authorised by the first license application, it has been deduced that the holes are directly connected to the main sett and as such a further licence application has been made to approve a live dig to close down the holes and promote a change in behaviour to use a newly created bank to access the main sett in future.

The license application was submitted for the live dig to happen on the 15th November with Mid Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, Natural England and other approved contractors installing more underground fencing, excavation of current tunnels and filling with hardcore once agreed that it is appropriate. Finally production of a new 'mound' to provide extra areas within the cemetery that the badgers can use to tunnel back to the main sett.

BROMSGROVE NORTH CEMETERY, BARLEY MOW LANE, CATSHILL

Following a period of works which commenced on the 4th July 2016, the construction of the necessary infrastructure including the main access road, footpaths, fencing, surface water drainage with off-site infiltration soak away system and ancillary works is nearing completion. We will shortly be moving into the process of researching and consulting on the options that we will provide on the new site.

CORE ENVIRONMENTAL OPERATIONS

HIGHWAYS WORK

At the start of the year we worked with County and took on the grounds maintenance of Bromsgrove Highway from Slideslow Island in Bromsgrove to the boundary of Redditch, in addition to the street cleansing that we traditionally do. We have recently had the second closure where we carried out all the maintenance work using operatives from both Bromsgrove and Redditch Place and Core Teams. The results were excellent and the teams worked well from both authorities. The work carried out included: tree lifting and removal, spraying, mowing, strimming, flailing, cleansing and sweeping. The County Council pay us for this additional work.

VEHICLES

This year we have invested in our refuse service by ordering 5 new 26 tonne refuse collection vehicles. These vehicles comply with the latest Euro 6 Environmental Standards including 360 degree camera recording systems, lane departure warning systems, cycle safety, together with route optimisation and communication software. Due to the current high demand for these vehicles delivery times have been delayed and we should receive these vehicles during May next year.

WASTE COLLECTIONS

- New filming of recycling awareness is taking place in November 16 to be added to the council's You Tube profile and to be used elsewhere;
- New recycling awareness tags are to be launched from January 17 to assist in the education of residents regarding contamination. Leaflets have also been produced to be delivered to target areas, again in January 17;
- In Cab units are now fitted to all RCV's working on both domestic and recycling collections. This is currently being trialled to assess coverage areas and should be live from late November to early December 16. These units allow the crews to report issues such as bins going in the backs of trucks, or bins not out, in real time and they also allow us to see where the vehicles are on their rounds.
- Trade waste is now making a small surplus as officers continue to promote the service;
- Officers have managed to retrieve around 20 customers who had previously left the Trade Waste Service, resulting in an increase in revenue and extra positive publicity;
- Trade Waste leaflets are continuing to be used in the business rates details for 17/18 financial year;
- A Trade waste recycling service is to be introduced in 17/18;
- Officers are currently exploring options to work with neighbouring authorities.

Garden Waste:

- Garden waste fees are to increase to £42.00 from February 17.

Sweepers:

- Route optimisation software has been recently purchased (September 16) and is currently being worked on and reviewed by officers.

BDC PLACE TEAMS

Place working is now in its second year and is still evolving as the staff and teams develop greater awareness of their areas and adjust their work to meet that demand. Prioritisation has improved across the three teams, allowing us to use our time more efficiently and achieve the following without additional staff and resources:

- A higher number of cuts on our grass verges and open spaces than was achieved in 2015, despite the challenge of exceptional growth rates this year. Further improvements are expected to increase this further in 2017.
- An increasing number of Bulky Waste collections, which generate additional income for the council, with over 1600 collections carried out since April.

Unfortunately, fly tipping is on the increase with over 1,100 fly tips collected so far this financial year. These have ranged from small single items through to significant lorry loads requiring our HIAB to remove using large skips and the hydraulic grab.

Our relationship with BDHT has continued to develop, and we are now carrying out a wide range of paid clearance jobs on their behalf whilst working to reduce the impact of fly tipping on their bin stores. Working closely with our refuse team, we have now agreed a more streamlined approach with BDHT to address the problems at the remaining trouble spots where residents are fly tipping and causing other problems, so that issues can be escalated and resolved rather than creating additional work and cost for both BDHT and BDC.

We are still working closely with WCC as part of Project Optimise, and have completed projects on the Bromsgrove Highway, A38, and the Oakalls estate to share resources and increase the standard of maintenance in line with our strategic purpose, but with minimal cost impact on either BDC or WCC. This has been highly successful to date and it is hoped that we will do more joint projects with WCC over the coming year to continue improving the maintenance of our District.

Ongoing partnership working with BDHT has helped manage issues in their bin stores due to fly tipping and misuse. This benefits their residents, and generates additional income for BDC. Recent discussions have set out a more joined up

approach to these issues so that BDHT can focus on resolving the causes of the problems, with support from BDC Officers.

BDC Enforcement Highlights

- April 2016 – Joint stop and search project took place with the police in the Wythall area to tackle illegal transporting of waste and fly tipping. No breaches found.
- Three fly tips currently under investigation and awaiting PACE interviews.
- One fly tip prosecution being prepared with Legal Team for court process.
- April 2016 - £300 FPN paid for breach of 'Duty of Care' for disposal of waste after local resident identified fly tipping. Covered in local press.
- Joint working with Co-ordinators to gather evidence on fly tips and issue warning letters where prosecution not appropriate.
- October 2016 - Fly Posting Project started across the District to remove posters and warn organisations of the penalties if they erect any in the future.
- Routine patrols in Bromsgrove Town Centre to address issues arising from local businesses and work with them to resolve them:
 - Fast food outlets in Bromsgrove now starting to carry out additional litter picking as part of their closing routine after being spoken to by our enforcement officer. Still working well 6 months on.
 - Pubs have been spoken to about smoking related litter and are continuing to support us on this in Bromsgrove Town Centre.
 - New Market organisers working with us to address market waste being disposed of in our litter bins. Issue reduced, but now involving the Town Centre Manager in this process to address few remaining issues.
- Closer working with Parish Councils regarding littering, fly tipping and dog fouling – letter dropped warning letters regarding known issues.
- 135 Abandoned Vehicles investigated and dealt with since 1st April 2016.
- On-going partnership with Enforcement teams from Wychavon, Wyre Forest and Worcester City to share best practice in tackling environmental crime.

BROMSGROVER AREA NORTH WORCESTERSHIRE WATER MANAGEMENT

Lead on specific location Flood Investigations and works by land owners, Highways, STW and NWWM to reduce flood risk at:

1. Wast Hills Lane;
2. Dagnell End Road;
3. Lea End Lane;
4. Cherry Pit Lane;
5. Bentley Pauncefoot work with Parish Lengthsman on ditches and hotspots;
6. Sidemoor School culvert removal;
7. Wythall gypsy site clearance of dumped rubbish to reinstate flow in the watercourse, working with Rooftop Housing and BDC Environmental Services;
8. Cross Boundary working with Solihull on highway flooding issues;
9. Belbroughton - advising the Parish Council following defects appearing in a pool dam.

Major Schemes achieved or ongoing:

10. Hagley Infrastructure Scheme working with STW, Environment Agency and Highways to reduce Hagley flood risk and increase capacity and resilience on watercourses, highway network and STW surface water sewers;
11. Callowbrook - completed the flood storage pools in November and have since undertaken planting and recently some earth moving and finishing touches. EA grant was £50k and contributions of over £20k from County and Local Councillor;
12. Bournheath - flood risk modelling undertaken and scoping options for a scheme to reduce flood risk to the village, properties and highways. Likely total scheme cost of around £200k. Preliminary Grant bid with E.A. and hope to get approval before January to link up with significant STW works at same time to reduce foul sewer flooding issues;
13. Bromsgrove Town Surface Water Management Plan Group - Membership includes NWWM, EA, BDC Environmental Services, Highways. Multiple locations have had flood risk issues resolved in and around town. Ongoing E.A. flood risk modelling at present and investigations over next year on whether a major flood defence scheme is warranted and feasible;
14. A38 Charford flooding issues - Work to investigate opportunities for funding and works with STW, Highways, Economic Development, EA. Early stages at present of understanding infrastructure and building a working group.

General activities:

15. Flooding Hotspot guide produced to aid the PLACE teams working in lead up to and response to flood events. Including a health and safety review for each;

16. Recording assets (e.g. culverts, trash screens etc) onto a countywide web mapping system;
17. Revising the sandbag policy;
18. Reviewing the Multi-Agency Flood Plans and putting together Flood Response plans to guide actions in flood events;
19. Part of 'Love Your River Bromsgrove' working group helping to improve water quality and wildlife;
20. Response to Government consultation regarding proposed planning changes.

Planning work:

21. 15 Major applications consulted on from April 2016.
22. Very large site, Perryfields pre-planning advice role. Aiming to improve drainage across the wider area.

WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES

Environmental Health

The service now boasts several Primary Authority agreements whereby a business enters into a contractual agreement with us on a full cost-recovery basis to receive assured advice. One of these is a major food warehouse in Stoke Prior. Further, several Bromsgrove businesses have signed up to the Healthy Eating award (which again is a paid for business support process) and work continues with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to develop a scheme aimed at helping small producers and manufacturers to access new markets.

82 food hygiene inspections were carried out in Bromsgrove District between April and August 2016 which is down on the same period last year. This reflects the high demand on resources involved in addressing the summer spike in reactive work and the fact that the service is currently involved in some complex enforcement activities including high profile prosecutions. Members should note the similar pattern of work in 2014/15 where the majority of food inspection work was done in the second half of the year. We expect 2016/17 to be similar in work pattern due to the volume of reactive work being undertaken and we will continue to monitor closely progress against the full inspection programme for the year so as to ensure that it is achieved. Compliance in Bromsgrove remains high at 97.4% with only 12 premises currently rated level 2 or below in the Food Standards Agency's Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (which rates business from levels 0-5). These businesses which are deemed not to be "broadly compliant" are subject to further intervention to ensure that hygiene requirements are met.

Environmental Health complaints, enquiries and notifications recorded by WRS are set to exceed previous years, with noise nuisance cases between June and September up on the previous year. The service has conducted an extensive investigation relating to an alleged odour nuisance arising from animal by-product operations in the District and Environmental Health Practitioners have continued to work with Network Rail and their contractors to minimise noise impacts of on-going track upgrade and electrification works through Bromsgrove.

Air Quality

The update of the Air Quality Action Plan has been published on the WRS website that details action taken to resolve air quality by all over the last 12 months. This is to be followed by the annual assessment report (known as Annual Status Report) which reports on air quality monitoring and considers all changes and their effects on air quality over the last 12 months. Ahead of LTP4's publication, WRS have been liaising with the County Council's Project Manager for the A38 Corridor improvements to ensure that improving the air quality situation around Redditch Road and Lickey End are priorities and incorporated in the proposals.

Permitted Processes

The Pollution Control regulations are there to protect human health by ensuring emissions to air, land and water are controlled. Certain industrial processes such as car resprayers and flexible packaging printers use large volumes of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) which would be emitted to atmosphere if not controlled. There are other industrial processes that are regulated also, which means firms have to apply for a permit. In granting the permit WRS work with the business so that they know what they need to do to comply by using our wealth of experience of dealing with similar companies. Our aim is to support the businesses in navigating the red tape and protecting health and in Bromsgrove we believe most are compliant.

There are those companies that seek a competitive advantage by not controlling their emissions and operating without a permit. WRS have launched a campaign across the County to identify anyone who is operating illegally. You can check the WRS website for a list of all businesses that operate with the appropriate permit: <http://www.worcsregservices.gov.uk/media/1928600/May-2016-Public-Register-word-format.pdf> . If you suspect that a business is operating without a permit, please do not hesitate to call or check with our Permitting team on 01905 822799.

Licensing

Licensing Officers continue to monitor and respond to changes in national guidance and licensing legislation; the bi-annual data exchange for the National Fraud Initiative for taxi drivers, personal licence holders and street traders has just been completed successfully across the county and licensing is preparing for the implementation of the Immigration Act 2016, parts of which come into force for taxi licensing from 1st December 2016. Licensing Authorities will have to check that new and renewal applicants have the right to live and work in the United Kingdom prior to the issuing of a licence; licensing authorities will have to issue shorter licences if an applicant has limited leave to remain in the United Kingdom but can work while they are here so that the licence expires when the applicant's right to work expires.

Licensing has also completed this year's data exchange/match with each districts finance teams to aid reconciliation processes for those licences that each district invoices for – Premises licences/ Gambling Premises and Small Lotteries.

Licensing Officers are also participating in the "Safer Bromsgrove Licensed Sector Tasking Group" which is looking at issues in the Night Time Economy in and around the High Street/ Worcester Road Bromsgrove; and discussions are taking place with regards to whether or not things can be improved with joint working and the multi agency approach.

Licensing Officers are presenting new policies to the Licensing Committee in the areas of “Scrap Metal Licensing Policy” and on whether or not Members want to consider the introduction of a Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Penalty Points Scheme for taxi operators, vehicle owners and drivers.

APSE Award

We are very pleased to report that WRS were finalists in the “Best UK Environmental Health Team” category at this year’s Association for Public Service Excellence awards against very impressive competition. The awards exist to showcase the ability of Local Authorities to “pursue innovation within service delivery and implement new approaches aimed at improving the level of service to local communities and people”. The award submission focussed heavily on innovation and transformation work within your Community Environmental Health, Technical Services, Duty Officer and Intel Teams, including:

- The self-help package for nuisances
- Trying to resolve problems at the first point of contact through the Duty Officer system
- LEP work on schemes such as earned recognition
- The Healthy Choices Food award
- Working closely with legitimate businesses and their relevant trade bodies including business seminars
- Self-help for Planning Officers
- The creation of an EH Intel Team and tasking
- And carrying out contract work for other authorities.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership

North Worcestershire CSP (NWCSP) was created in May 2013. The Partnership provides a strategic and co-ordinated approach to addressing local community safety issues, working with a variety of public agencies and voluntary groups. Its vision is to keep North Worcestershire a safe place to live, work and visit. Local representation on the NWCSP is fulfilled through myself as Portfolio Holder for Community Safety.

At district level there is an operational community safety group called Safer Bromsgrove. There are also a number of sub-groups to the CSP, namely North Worcestershire Hate Incident Partnership, the Bromsgrove and Redditch Safeguarding Adults Group and a newly established Bromsgrove and Redditch ASB forum.

Alongside the Council's status as a Responsible Authority in the CSP, there is also a direct role in holding the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to account through the established West Mercia Police and Crime Panel. Again as Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, I am Bromsgrove District Council's representative on the panel.

North Worcestershire Community Safety Plan

NWCSP has a statutory duty to produce a three-year rolling plan outlining how it intends to address key crime and community safety priorities, as identified through its annual Strategic Assessment report.

The Strategic Assessment gathers research, evidence and intelligence from national and regional sources, as well as drawing on the professional expertise of those working locally. It is designed to be a point of reference and guidance to resource community safety initiatives among partner agencies across the area.

The latest Strategic Assessment is currently being produced and its findings will be used to draft a new Community Safety Partnership Plan for 2017-20.

The current North Worcestershire CSP priorities are:

- **Anti-Social Behaviour:** Work to reduce the number of anti-social behaviour incidents and bring perceptions in line with the downward trend in reported incidents
- **Burglary and Home Security:** Work to promote home security, reduce incidences of dwelling and non-dwelling burglary and improve residents' feelings of safety in their homes
- **Business and Rural Crime:** Support local delivery of the West Mercia PCC's Business and Rural Crime Strategies

- **Reducing Re-offending:** Work to increase our understanding of the reasons for re-offending in North Worcestershire and reduce the offending behaviour of targeted individuals through continued support of the Integrated Offender Management approach
- **Violence and Abuse:** Work to ensure residents are safe in their local neighbourhoods and at home without having to suffer violence, domestic abuse or hate crime.

CSP Funding 2016/17

NWCSP was awarded £149,250 in funding from the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner in April 2016, with funding amounts again based on previous year's allocations. £29,595 of the total amount is allocated specifically to project delivery in Bromsgrove District and this funding directed by the Safer Bromsgrove group.

| CSP Priority | Project/Initiative | Amount |
|-----------------------|---|-----------------|
| All | NW Analytical and Research Support | £24,000 |
| Anti-Social Behaviour | Youth Diversionary Projects – Bromsgrove and Redditch | £10,000 |
| Violence & Abuse | NW Hate Incident Partnership | £3,000 |
| Reducing Reoffending | NW Integrated Offender Management Projects | £5,000 |
| Multiple | Safer Bromsgrove | £24,595 |
| Multiple | Safer Redditch | £38,406 |
| Multiple | Safer Wyre Forest | £44,249 |
| | TOTAL | £149,250 |

The West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner also allocated 2016/17 funding amounts for the following countywide projects. Delivery of these projects also directly benefits local communities in Bromsgrove.

| | |
|--|---------|
| Hate Crime Awareness Week/Safe Places Scheme | £10,000 |
| Integrated Offender Management Strategic Development | £40,700 |

NWCSP Work Programme

Crime and ASB Data - The Partnership receives a regular crime and ASB update provided by the NWCSP Research and Information Officer. The performance report is compiled using various sources of partner data and provides information on current crime and ASB trends across the 3 districts. The update highlights geographical areas of concern, increases or decreases in crime types and areas where additional resources may be required.

CSP Sub Groups – The partnership receives regular updates from its various sub-groups regarding current project activity, specific successes and any areas where there may be barriers or concerns that require escalation to Strategic Managers and Senior Officers.

Safer Communities Board (SCB) – The Partnership receives updates from the countywide SCB which provides the upper-tier strategic management for community safety activity taking place across Worcestershire. The SCB has responsibility for monitoring and directing activity around Integrated Offender Management, the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Forums, Alcohol/Substance Misuse and Preventing Violent Extremism. The SCB was also instrumental in implementing the recent review of Community Safety Arrangements in Worcestershire.

Community Safety Review – The findings of the SCB review were presented to NWCSF in March 2016 and suggestions included consideration of a CSP self-assessment process; improvements to the reporting arrangements between the CSP and the SCB to develop stronger, more consistent formalised reporting lines between the two groups; and development of an annual induction programme for CSP members to ensure that partners statutory responsibilities are fully understood.

NWCSF acknowledged the findings of the review and quickly began to implement the suggestions, conducting a self-assessment process and holding a partnership induction session at the following meeting in the June 2016.

Safer Bromsgrove Group

Safer Bromsgrove is the district operational group responsible for delivery of the local action plan on behalf of the CSP. The group receives a district specific version of the crime and ASB update at each meeting and partners work together to develop and implement projects to address local community safety issues across Bromsgrove District.

As well as receiving support from the Council's Community Safety Team and other partners, Safer Bromsgrove has funded a dedicated Bromsgrove Community Safety Project officer as well. The Project Officer liaises with local residents and partners, carries out community safety assessments and site surveys and co-ordinates crime reduction activity on behalf of the group. Currently the Project Officer is working on crime reduction projects in Rock Hill, Aston Fields, Charford, Catshill, and Romsley.

Safer Bromsgrove has agreed to be a consultation forum and provide crime & ASB data to support the review of CCTV provision across the district, in accordance with the requirements of the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice.

A Bromsgrove Town Centres sub-group has been established following identification of a number of crime and ASB issues linked to the Night Time Economy in the High Street/Market Street area. The group was initially set up to look at licensing issues but has since widened its remit to look at other areas such as business crime and wider environmental issues in the Town Centres. The group includes local business owners and other stakeholders and is chaired by Cheryl Welsh, Bromsgrove Centres Manager. As a Community Safety sub-group, it will be able to tap into crime reduction expertise, prevention information and funding in order to support any interventions or solutions identified by members.

Activities to raise awareness of Hate Crime reporting took place in Bromsgrove on Friday the 14th October as part of national Hate Crime Awareness week. The Community Safety team organised a pop-up stall on the high street with street theatre performances to raise awareness of the issue and how to report incidents. The stall received a steady stream of visits from local residents and shoppers and also a surprise visit from Bromsgrove MP, Sajid Javid who tweeted his support for the event and posted a video of the activities during the day from his social media account

The Community Safety Schools programme is active in all middle and high schools in Bromsgrove offering a wide range of community safety workshops around subjects such as Hate Crime, Domestic Abuse, Substance Misuse and the impact of ASB on Communities. Alongside workshops and whole school activity days, the programme also offers one to one mentoring sessions for young people identified as being at risk of entering the criminal justice system or at risk of becoming victims of crime. Between Sept 2015 and June 2016 over 40 young people from Bromsgrove had received mentoring support through the programme, to reduce their risk of harm.

In Spring, Safer Bromsgrove provided funding for a youth work diversionary project at Churchfields in an attempt to engage with and divert young people gathering and causing disorder in the ASDA multi-storey car park. The project was devised by the YMCA Positive Activities worker, in partnership with the Community Safety Team, the local SNT and ASDA's Management team. The project provided detached youth workers to engage with young people through multi-sports and launched in June 2016 to coincide with half- term. There was a significant drop in the number of young people hanging around the site throughout the summer holidays and, together with the additional security measures at the car park, the project appears to have reduced the number of ASB incidents reported at the site. The project is now on hold as we go into the colder weather and partners are constantly reviewing ASB reports to ensure that the problem has not been displaced to other areas.

Finally, Safer Bromsgrove has provided funding to support an intergenerational project idea put forward by students at North Bromsgrove High School. The project began in September 2016 and pairs a group of students with a group of older residents from BDHT Supported Housing accommodation and together they are

working on a photography project with a community safety theme. This project will be showcased at a school event at the end of the programme in March.